

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01205 182221 Z

70-62

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1066

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T OTTAWA 01205

EXDIS

BOGOTA FOR THE SECRETARY; PARIS FOR DR. KISSINGER AND
AMB SULLIVAN

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, VN, CA

SUBJECT: CANADIAN ROLE IN ICCS VIETNAM

REF: STATE 095128

1. SUMMARY. COLLINS OF EXTAFF TOLD DCM MAY 18 THAT CABINET HAD REVIEWED CANADIAN ICCS MAY 17 AND PLANNED REACH DECISION IN PRINCIPLE AT NEXT MEETING MAY 24. FINAL DECISION, HOWEVER, WOULD BE TAKEN ONLY AFTER DISCUSSION WITH USG FOLLOWING CONCLUSION PARIS TALKS MAY 26. COLLINS SUGGESTED THAT THAT DISCUSSION BE BETWEEN AMBASSADOR CADIEUX AND UNDER SECRETARY PORTER OR DR. KISSINGER. HE ALSO SUGGESTED PHONE CALL BETWEEN SECRETARY AND EXTAFF MINISTER SHARP AT THAT TIME.

2. EXTAFF ASST UNDER- SECRETARY COLLINS TOLD DCM MAY 18 THAT FACTOR WEIGHING BY FAR MOST HEAVILY IN GOC DECISION ON ITS ICCS ROLE WAS ATTITUDE OF USG. CABINET HAD CONSIDERED IMPACT OF POSSIBLE DECISION AGAINST CONTINUATION ICCS ROLE ON WHOLE SPECTRUM OF US- CANADIAN RELATIONS. DCM MENTIONED INTENSE INTEREST OF HIGH OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON IN GOC' S RETAINING ICCS MEMBER-
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SHIP, AND COLLINS AGREED AND ALLUDED TO USG " DEEP FREEZE" REACTION OF LAST WINTER. COLLINS THEN SAID CONSIDERATION HAD ALSO BEEN GIVEN TO POSSIBLE USG " PAY- OFF" IF GOC WERE TO CONTINUE ROLE, BUT CONCLUSION WAS THAT ANY BENEFIT NON- TRANSFERABLE.

3. COLLINS SAID NO RECENT APPROACHES HAD BEEN MADE TO GOC ON MAINTAINING ICCS MEMBERSHIP, BUT GOC BELIEVED HANOI STILL INTERESTED IN CANADIANS' CONTINUING. AT SAME TIME, ITS EVALUATION WAS THAT HANOI WOULD NOT MIND IF GOC DROPPED OUT AND/ OR WERE REPLACED, SINCE IT COULD ARGUE PEACE MACHINERY WAS STILL IN PLACE, PROVIDING COVER AND JUSTIFICATION FOR ITS OPERATIONS.

4. COLLINS SAID THAT CABINET PREFERENCE WAS FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM ICCS IF ONLY BECAUSE SUCH OPTION WAS MORE SALEABLE PUBLICLY IN LIGHT SHARP' S RECENT STATEMENTS GOC WOULD GET OUT IF SITUATION IN VIETNAM SHOWED NO IMPROVEMENT. DCM MENTIONED GENERAL DISINTEREST OF PUBLIC IN MATTER, JUDGING FROM MEDIA COVERAGE, WHICH SHOULD MAKE PUBLIC OPINION MALLEABLE AND FAVORABLE DECISION MANAGEABLE. COLLINS DISAGREED, SAYING PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC WERE BASICALLY AGAINST CONTINUED ROLE, AND OPPOSITION TO MEMBERSHIP COULD BE FIRED UP ANY MOMENT, AS IT WAS OVER SECOND HELICOPTER INCIDENT.

5. COLLINS DID NOT DISMISS POSSIBILITY OF DECISION TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP FOR ANOTHER 60-90 DAY PERIOD, THOUGH THIS OPTION HAD NOT APPEARED FEASIBLE MONTH OR SO AGO. MOST DIFFICULT OPTION TO SELL WOULD OF COURSE BE OPEN-ENDED COMMITMENT TO STAY ON, WITH RIGHT TO WITHDRAW AT ANY TIME ON 90 DAYS' NOTICE.

6. COLLINS REITERATED EARLIER VIEW THAT ITALY APPEARED TO GOC TO BE GOOD PROSPECT AS REPLACEMENT.

7. COLLINS SAID CABINET WOULD DELAY FINAL DECISION UNTIL AFTER CONCLUSION OF PARIS TALKS MAY 26, THOUGH TIMING WAS VERY TIGHT AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECISION STILL SCHEDULED ON OR BEFORE MAY 31. HE SAID NO MEETING BETWEEN
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THE SECRETARY AND SHARP WAS ENVISAGED, BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE EMBARRASSMENT TO BOTH SIDES, PARTICULARLY CANADIAN, BUT GOC WAS THINKING OF MEETING IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN AMBASSADOR CADIEUX AND UNDER SECRETARY PORTER OR DR. KISSINGER. FOLLOW- UP PHONE CALL BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND SHARP WOULD OFFER OPPORTUNITY FOR " ADDITIONAL ARM- TWISTING".

SCHMIDT

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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